PICCOLINO

PZ
7
.K586
Pi
copy2

FT MEADE
GenColl

MARIAN KING

PICCOLINO

PICCOLINO

STORY BY MARIAN KING

PICTURES BY NELL STOLP SMOCK

JUNIOR PRESS BOOKS
ALBERT WHITMAN & CO.
CHICAGO
1939

Copy 2

PZ7
.K586
Pi
Copy 2.

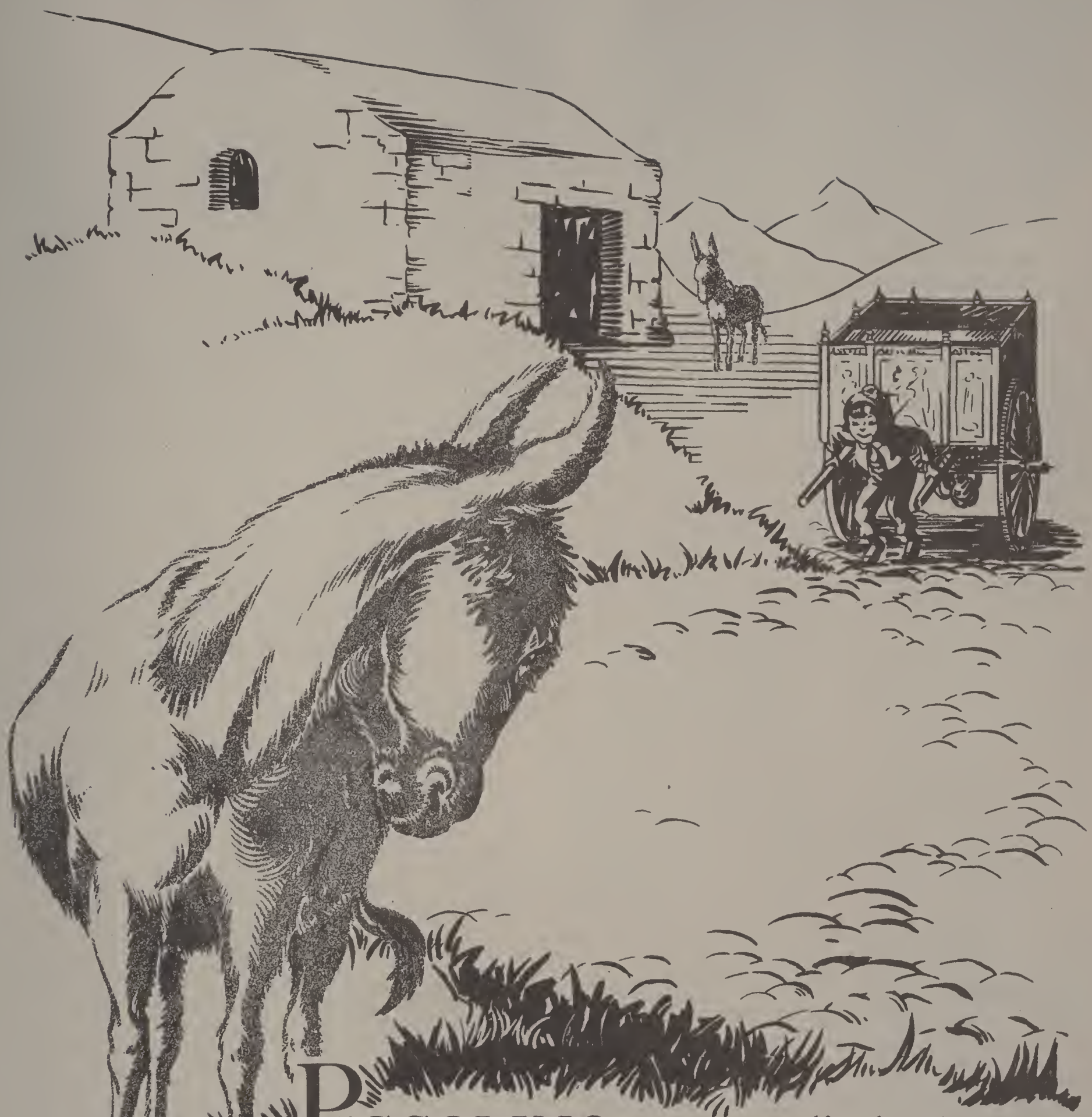
COPYRIGHT 1939 BY
ALBERT WHITMAN AND CO.
CHICAGO

LITHOGRAPHED IN THE U.S.A.

MAY 29 1939

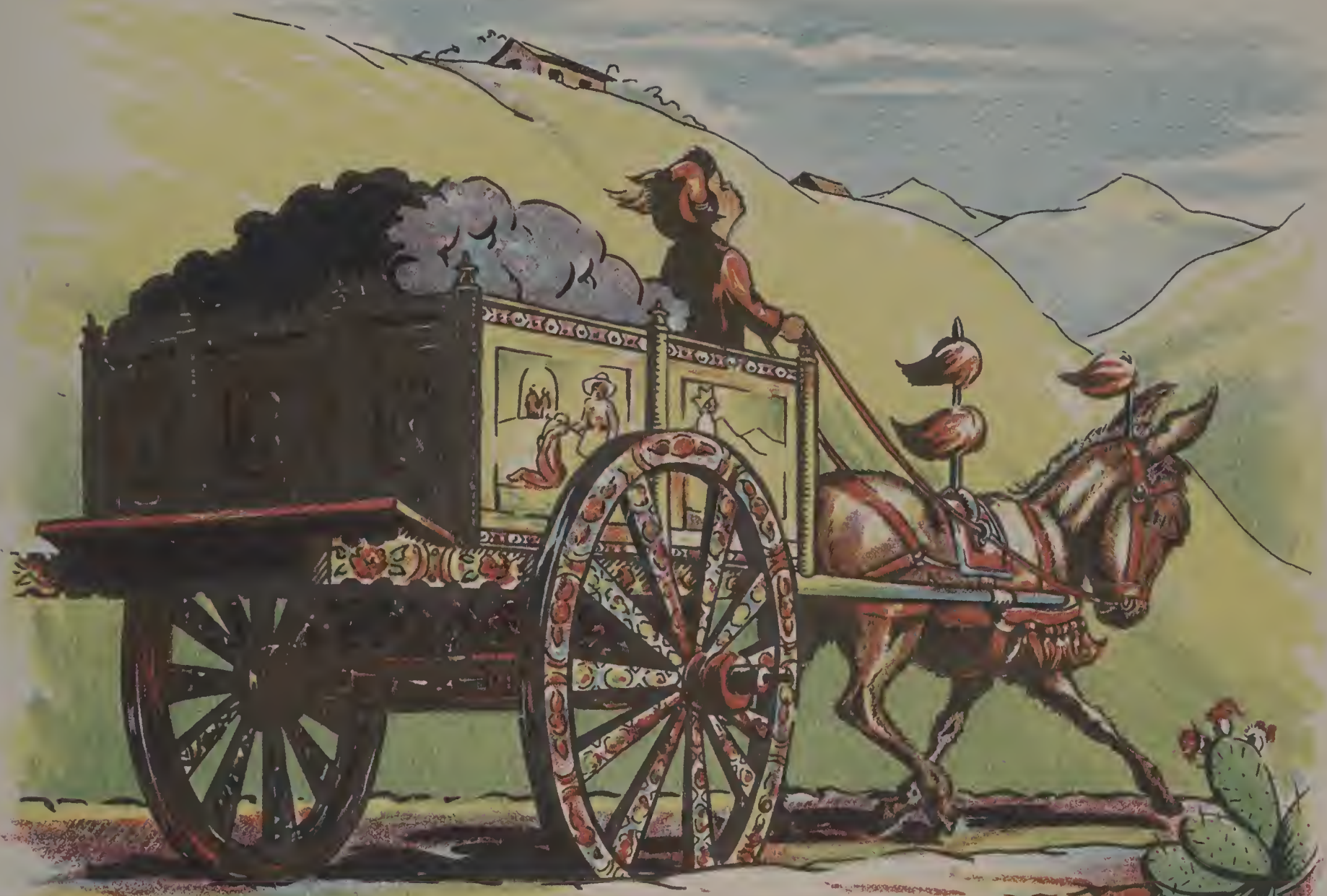
©CIA 129655

FJ.N 20 Je 29



PICCOLINO was a little brown and gray donkey. He lived in Sicily. Every morning at half past five he was harnessed to a beautiful hand-painted cart. Gaily colored feathers were fastened across his shoulders.

Then Micco, his young master, climbed into the front seat. Flowering heads of purple cauliflower were piled high behind him. *"Va, Piccolino! Va ora!"* he called. This meant, "Go, Piccolino! Go now!"



But this fat, lazy, stubborn donkey did not move a step. He turned his shaggy head and wiggled his ears at his master. Micco knew what this meant, so he sang a gay little song. Then Piccolino lifted his small hoofs and started down the path that led to the long, winding road. Micco was singing all the time.

Each time Micco sang this lively little tune he made up different words for it.

Soon they reached the plaza in the village where all the other donkeys were gathered. Piccolino paid no attention to them. He was not interested in their friendly whines. But when he heard one of the men sing or blow on a lacquer whistle, then he pricked up his ears and turned his head.

When Micco had sold all the cauliflower in his cart, Piccolino started home without any coaxing. He picked his way slowly over the long, winding road.

When he came to the little white villa on the hillside he pulled the empty cart into the yard. His harness was taken off and a long rope was tied around his neck and fastened to the trunk of an almond tree.

Piccolino watched Micco put the cart into the shed. Then he bent his knees under him and rolled in the soft earth. It felt very good. Warm sunshine beat down on him and made his eyes blink.

Piccolino's mother was very proud of him because he was the most handsome donkey on the island. But she knew that he was lazy and stubborn. "You should be very proud," she said to him, "but you are lazy. This cart is the most beautiful one in all Sicily."

Piccolino's mother looked down the road where big and little donkeys pulled heavy carts or carried large bundles on their backs. "If you had to work all day as hard as other donkeys do, I don't know how you would get along."

Piccolino just wiggled his ears and looked at his mother in his sleepy way.

Far in the distance he could see the fishermen and hear their singing as they rowed their striped colored boats to the shore.

A young donkey named Nina came to live on the hillside. Piccolino and Nina became very good friends. He showed her where the sweetest grass grew and how to avoid the prickly cactus.

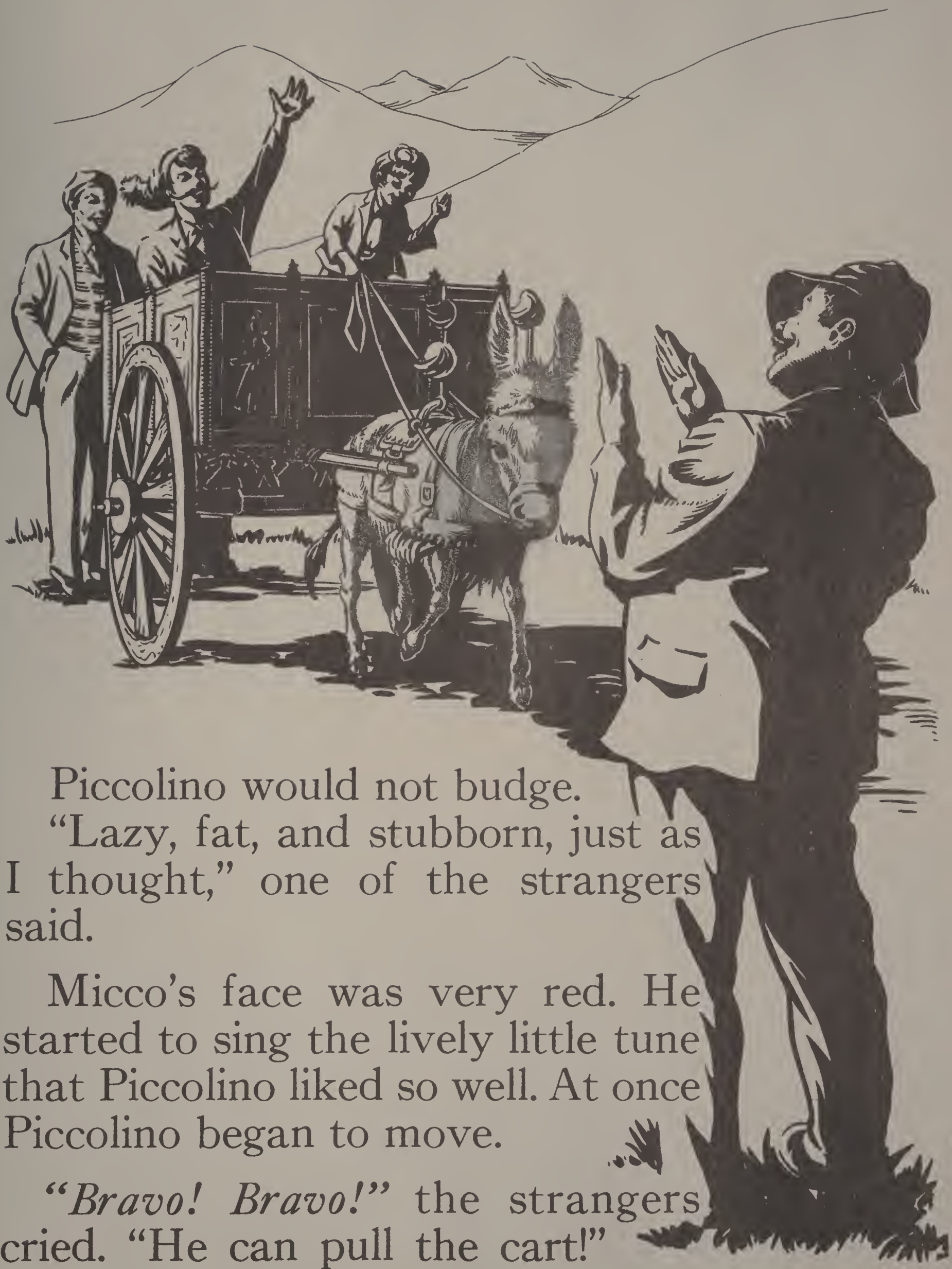
He told her which goats butted and which ones were friendly. He told her that the olives on the trees were very bitter. And he led her to the edge of the hill to listen to the songs of the fishermen.

One day there was great excitement in Micco's house. Piccolino's mother heard strange voices. She began to worry.

"They're coming this way!" she whispered to Piccolino, as three strange men walked towards them. Then she heard Micco's father say, "He's the finest donkey in Sicily."

"Magnificio—fine!" One of the men was delighted with Piccolino. "But can he pull the cart?"

"Pull the cart!" Micco smiled. "I'll show you!" He harnessed Piccolino to the beautiful hand-painted cart. "Watch him!" Micco shouted proudly. *"Va, Piccolino! Va ora!"* he called.



Piccolino would not budge.

"Lazy, fat, and stubborn, just as I thought," one of the strangers said.

Micco's face was very red. He started to sing the lively little tune that Piccolino liked so well. At once Piccolino began to move.

"Bravo! Bravo!" the strangers cried. "He can pull the cart!"

But as soon as Micco stopped singing, Piccolino stopped moving.

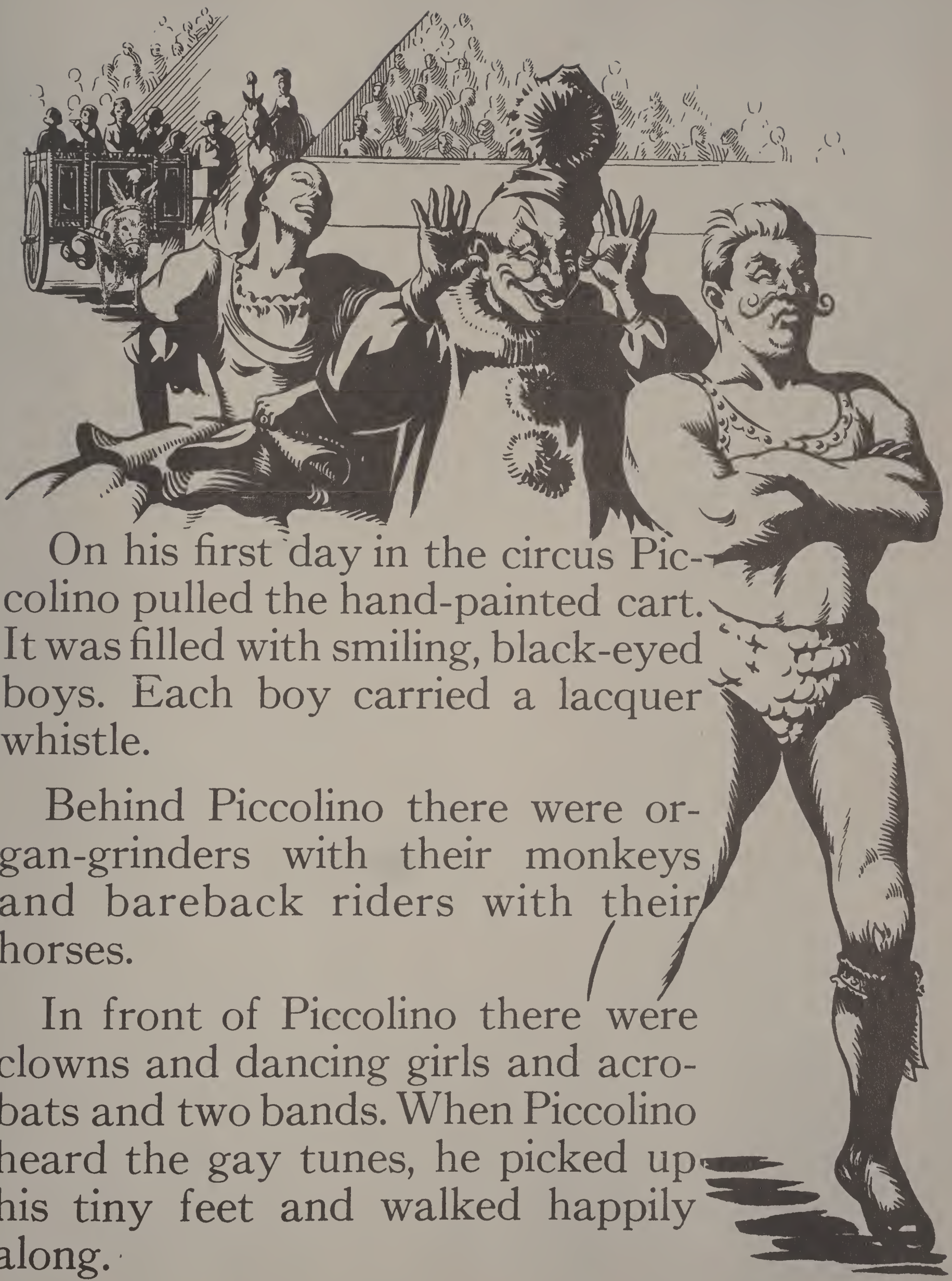
"He'll do! He's different! We'll take him and the boy also!"

The strangers walked towards the cart to look at the beautiful pictures that covered it.

Piccolino did not know that he and Micco and the hand-painted cart were going to join a circus. He did not know that he would have to leave his mother and Nina. As long as Micco sang to him, everything seemed all right.

In a few days Piccolino and Micco joined the circus in southern Italy. Micco was excited, but Piccolino was homesick. He did not like all these strangers.

He missed the warm sunshine and the soft earth that felt good on his back when he rolled in it. Most of all he missed his mother and Nina and the songs of the fishermen.



On his first day in the circus Piccolino pulled the hand-painted cart. It was filled with smiling, black-eyed boys. Each boy carried a lacquer whistle.

Behind Piccolino there were organ-grinders with their monkeys and bareback riders with their horses.

In front of Piccolino there were clowns and dancing girls and acrobats and two bands. When Piccolino heard the gay tunes, he picked up his tiny feet and walked happily along.

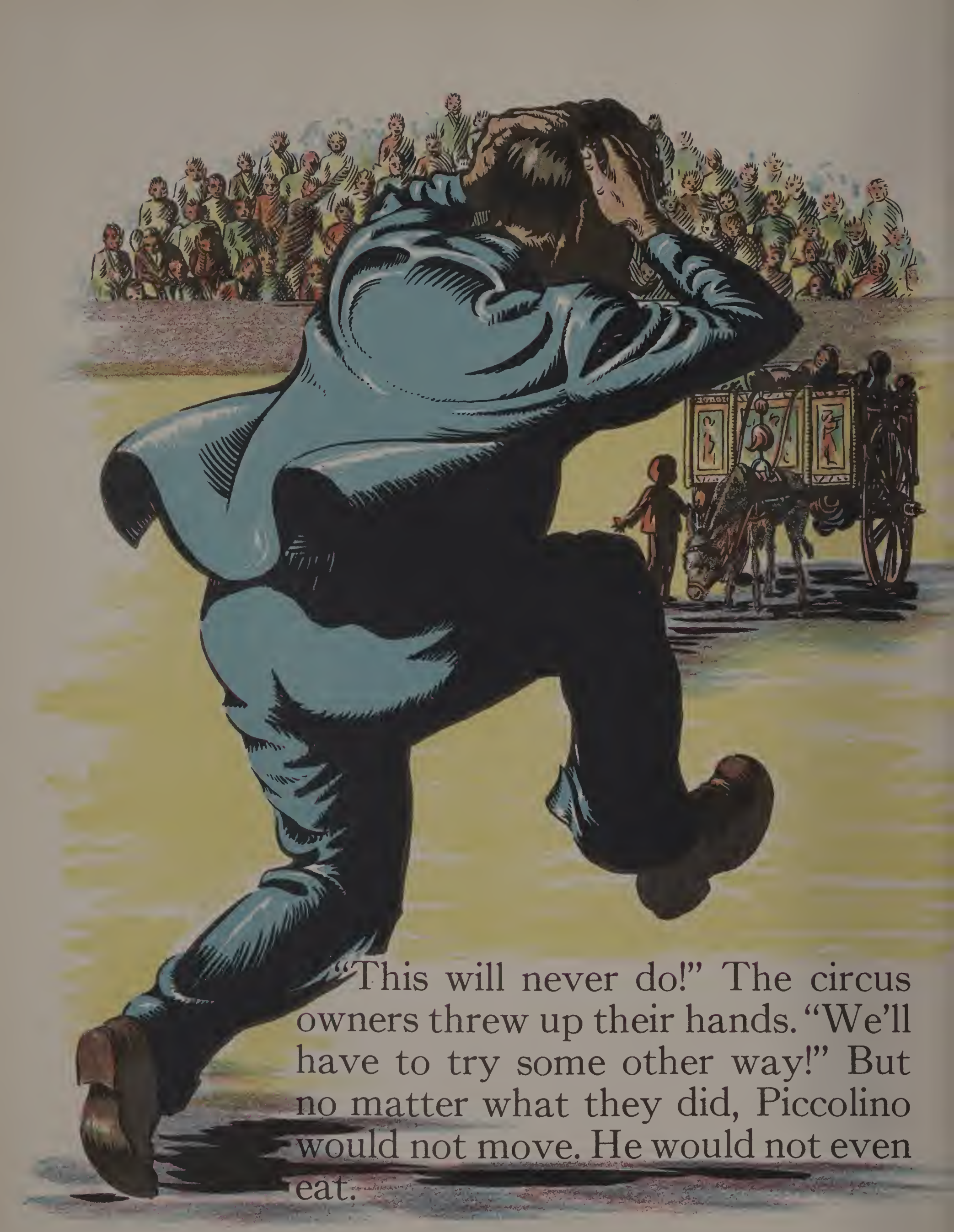
On the second day, the boys in Micco's cart blew on their whistles. It made Piccolino think of Sicily. Slowly he turned his shaggy head. He saw two big tears roll down Micco's face. Piccolino grew sad and would not move.

Quickly Micco waved to the boys to stop their playing. Then he jumped to the ground and ran to Piccolino. He began to sing Piccolino's favorite song. Slowly Piccolino moved on for his master.

But on the third day, Piccolino would not move at all. Micco sang and sang until he could not sing another note. Every man in the two bands played and played until he could not play another note. Some of the men played trumpets. They blew until they were red in the face.

Some of the men played banjos. They played until their fingers were stiff.

Some of the men played accordions. They pulled until their arms ached. Still Piccolino would not move.



"This will never do!" The circus owners threw up their hands. "We'll have to try some other way!" But no matter what they did, Piccolino would not move. He would not even eat.

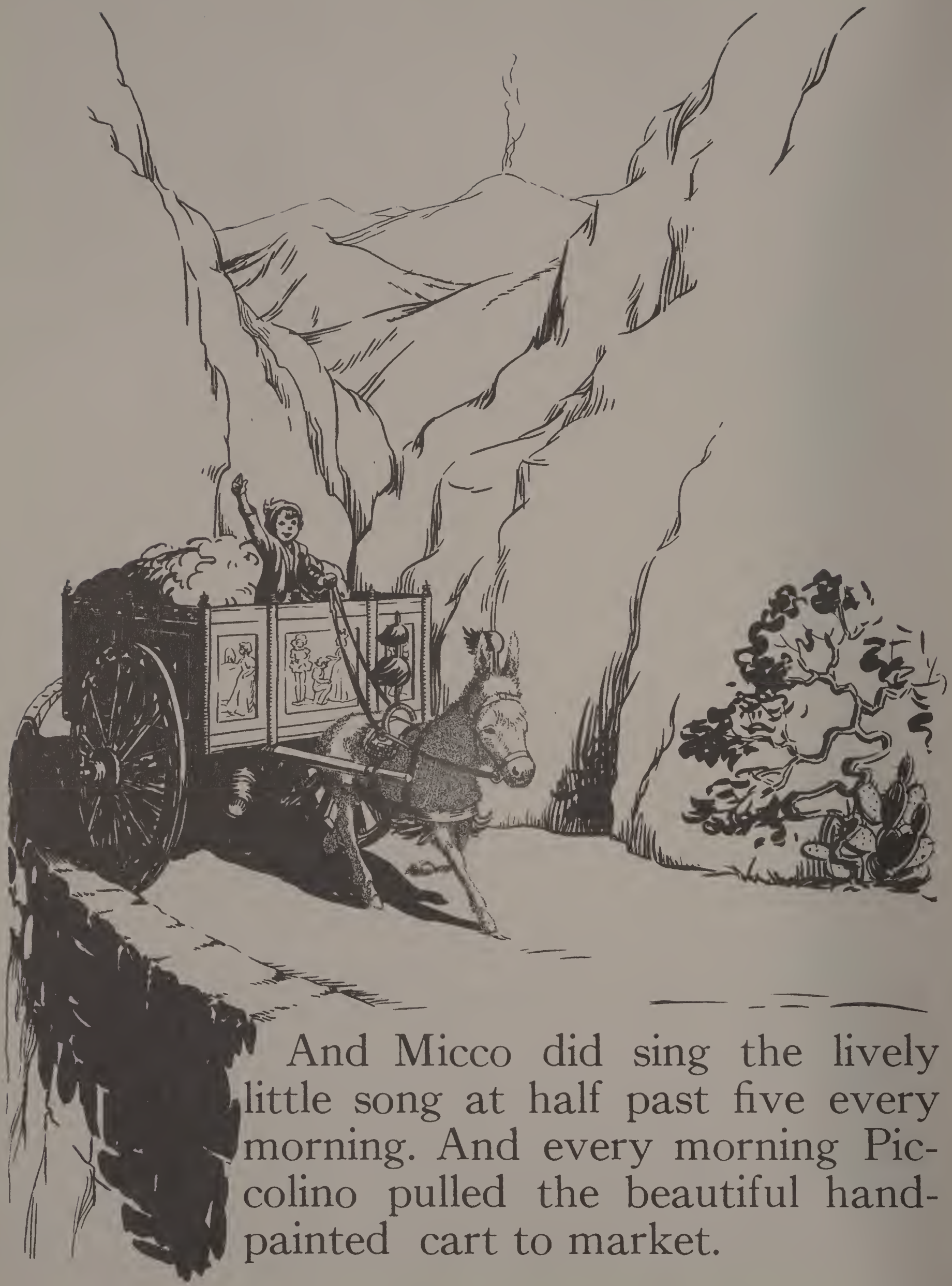
"If they will only let us go back home," Micco said to Piccolino, "we will never leave it again for all the circuses in the world!"

"Micco!" called one of the circus owners. "Here is money to take you home!" He gave Micco a handful of coins. "Your Piccolino just won't do as a circus trouper. And such a beautiful cart, too!"

"Come, Piccolino! Come now! We are going home. To Sicily!" Piccolino moved quickly now. Soon he would see his mother and Nina. Soon he would hear the songs of the fishermen.

As they took the boat across the Straits of Messina to the beautiful island of Sicily, Micco put his arms around Piccolino's neck and said, "I was homesick too, but now I am happy again." And he began to sing.

Piccolino wiggled his ears. He looked at the beautiful hand-painted cart. He seemed to say, "Master, just sing that song for me whenever you want me to pull the cart."



And Micco did sing the lively little song at half past five every morning. And every morning Piccolino pulled the beautiful hand-painted cart to market.

THE END

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00024791075